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Enlargement and the Mediterranean Dimension of the European Union: The Role of Cyprus

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When Cyprus joins the European Union it will be joining a Community of around twenty-one states, that would still be in a process of negotiations for another wave of enlargement, leading eventually to a Union of 27 or more member states. The main characteristics of this Union-to-be will be its heterogeneity in terms of the levels of economic development, languages, religions, political and legal systems, defence and foreign policy orientation. It will be a Union composed mainly of small states with a population of around 10 million or less.[1] In a European Union of 21 member states, Cyprus will only be above Luxembourg in population terms, but equal to it in all respects when it comes to participation in the Union's institutions. Further, Cyprus will be joining an EU in which the Mediterranean region features rather low in its priorities and this goes against a fundamental Cypriot interest that as an EU member state it would want the Union to be a greater factor in Mediterranean stability. Over and above these considerations, Cyprus is most likely to be still burdened by the unresolved "Cyprus Question".

The wider objective of Cyprus's policy of joining the European Union is intimately linked to the island's weakness in world politics that derives from its small size. Therefore, for Cyprus, it must be expected that its membership priorities would be to reduce its economic and political vulnerabilities. No doubt, Cyprus will use its membership to try and resolve the "Cyprus Question", but presumably looking beyond this issue, it will also have a strong interest in the maintenance of stability in the Mediterranean region, since the latter is the context or environment in which it has to survive and prosper. The main question then is how Cypriot priorities will fit with the aims of the Union and its member states.

The most encouraging factor is that due to its small size and possibly the effects of the "Cyprus Problem", Cyprus has exhibited both a strong measure of foreign policy coherence and strong domestic support, which, if projected into the future, will increase its potential for success in pursuing its aims at the European level. The aims Cyprus should pursue at the level of the EU level will no doubt first be articulated at the national level and then be transposed to the EU institutions where Cypriot executives will engage in a continuous bargaining game involving fellow executives from the other member states and representatives of the supranational institutions. This is the daily life of most member states as captured by both the inter-governmentalist and comparative political or multi-governance approaches to the analysis of EU decision-making. At the EU level, a measure of flexibility and the formation of coalitions is required to ensure overall success, and in the end, and in most cases, the outcome may be different from that initially formulated nationally. When Cyprus joins the EU, not only state executives but also sub-national actors will participate in the EU's decision-making process. In some instances the latter may also try to circumvent the national authorities by appeal to, or collusion with, European supranational institutions or plain Europe-wide players. The decision-making process is indeed a messy and not a straightforward one.

In the light of this discussion it is tempting to divert the analysis to a numerical and quantitative approach, comparing the weight Cyprus will have in the institutions with that of the other member states, the potential coalition permutations in which it could be involved, the potential players and the likely outcomes. In this framework too, a number of variables could also be isolated that would help to explain possible coalition formations, like neutralism and pacifism, smallness, level of development, geographic position and so on. State-type is likely to explain a strong measure of the member states' foreign policy. Concurrently, analysis can also focus on the foreign-policy priorities that states have formulated or are likely to take a strong position on, thus permitting the analyst to identify a **"community of mutual interests"** that may lead member states to collude on certain issues but not on others.

All these approaches are important, however there is one simple fact that must not be ignored, namely that small states, in spite of their weakness, are not completely impotent in the international system, nor must they be considered so in a Community of states such as the EU. A quantitative analysis of small states in the EU such as the one alluded to in the previous paragraph runs the danger of overlooking the importance on certain policy issues that small states can have. In sum, small states cannot influence policies across the board, but they can initiate important policy initiatives and influence policy-making in other areas not started by them. It is to this role that Cyprus and other small states must attach importance.

Lack of resources constrains small states to prioritise and concentrate on their immediate problems. Applied to Cyprus, this means that, besides its own economic development and the solution of the national question, the other big problem that would loom large in Cypriot EU and foreign policy concerns would be the question of security and stability in the Mediterranean region. In practice, Cyprus would only achieve its aims by building coalitions with other states which is nothing new considering that this is the staple approach in decision-making in the EU.

However, the number of possible coalitions that Cyprus would be able to enter into, to achieve specific targets, could vary widely: for example, with other Mediterranean member states; with states that are similarly weak and small or are located on Europe's periphery and are deeply concerned about the instability they face beyond the Union's frontiers; with member states of comparable economic development or which have similar sectional interests. Of course states with similar priorities can also at times find themselves in a competitive rather than a collaborative relationship as they may be struggling for the meagre supply of scarce resources. Thus the Mediterranean member states have the strongest reason to pursue stability in the Mediterranean region and to achieve this by granting more trade concessions to the Mediterranean non-member countries. However, traditionally they have been the staunchest opponents of freer agricultural trade in the Mediterranean region.

The Mediterranean Dimension that the European Union Confronts

As an EU member state, Cyprus will be in the unique position of being the only wholly Mediterranean State of the Union and therefore the most sensitive to instability in the region. The other Mediterranean member states of the EU - France, Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal, even though the latter is not a Mediterranean littoral state - are all continental states and this has meant that for the greater part of their history, they have been strongly engaged in political events as they have unfolded in the central European core. We need not be reminded that one of the main aims of the Schuman Declaration was to bring reconciliation between France and Germany. Historically then, European interest in the Mediterranean region has been fleeting and inconsistent. In the 19th century, during the colonial era, the Mediterranean region was a peripheral zone supplying the European core, while the sea was a means of communications linking the northern regions of Europe with their possessions in Africa and the Far East. Though the European powers established colonies from Morocco to Syria, they were unable to impose their complete hegemony on the region. Indeed, the last time the Mediterranean region was united under a single European power was during the era of the Roman Empire.

The EU faces two main types of problems in the Mediterranean region: first the challenges posed to security in the wider meaning and second the conditions prevailing in the Mediterranean region that make the realisation of a Mediterranean policy difficult if not impossible. Both types of problems must be addressed if a Mediterranean policy is to be successfully launched and maintained over time.

One of the conditions that undermine the chances of success of a Mediterranean policy is the political fragmentation in the region. Unity and diversity have paradoxically co-existed for a long time in the Mediterranean region. Norman Davies has observed that, "*once the Muslim states took root in the Levant and in Africa, the Mediterranean became an area of permanent political division.*"[2] This is an overstatement of the facts considering the long period of cohabitation between Islam and Christianity, a situation that was disturbed permanently by the establishment of the Ottoman Empire. Since then, division has been endemic and is likely to persist in the future. Therefore, what the European Union can hope to achieve in the region is to metaphorically keep the fire under control and not to extinguish it completely. The chances of some form of political unity in the region appear precarious though not wholly farfetched. The current state of fact is that the Mediterranean region does not yet meet the requirements of an 'international region'. Sub-regional and local systems have become the dominant factor in some of its areas.[3] A form of minimalist region-wide union must be considered only in a longer-term perspective, at first based on economic integration and co-operation, in other words an enhanced free trade area.

The most cited Mediterranean problem is the one of security in its widest meaning, comprising hard and soft questions as well as other aspects such as environmental and socio-economic welfare. Apart from the long-standing problems such as those in the Middle East, the Aegean, Cyprus and the Maghreb, active volcanoes that continuously threaten the stability of the region to different degrees, there is near-complete agreement that the region-wide challenges to security around the Mediterranean littoral are of a non-military nature and are concentrated mainly in the southern Mediterranean shore countries, with the danger of spillover northwards. They are linked to socio-economic problems generated by sluggish economic growth, rooted in the fall in oil revenues, the wrong set of policies pursued in these states and at times mismanagement of resources. These problems are a direct challenge to the survival of the political establishments in the main Arab states. The ramifications from the demise of the present state-structures in the southern Mediterranean shore countries remain hypothetical, involving a measure of crystal ball gazing, and varying in their prognosis from the utter pessimistic[4] to the imprudently optimistic. Considering the relative strengths

of both sides of the Mediterranean littoral, the collapse of order in the south may, at worst, result in nuisance policies for Europe, such as migratory pressures, and at best, though gradually, it may evolve into a new era of north-south co-existence on novel principles.

A serious military threat to Europe from the south is most unlikely and the southern Mediterranean countries probably attach more importance to the internal rather than the external threats to their security, while among the latter they mostly fear threats from their fellow southern neighbours.[5] To be true, they are also suspicious of Nato's initiatives in the Mediterranean region [6] while the alliance has commenced the "Nato Mediterranean Dialogue" with a number of countries of the region to alleviate these fears.[7] It has also started revising its southern flank strategy and a recent RAND Corporation study commissioned by the Italian Ministry of Defence appears to lay emphasis on the soft security questions as the main threat Nato faces on the southern flank, namely the instability that may accompany political upheaval and socio-economic pressures.[8]

North African states are critical of Europe's lack of engagement in the security problems of the region, a failure they perceive as one of the causes of the regional arms race.[9] However, as George Joffe points out, the European Union is handicapped in taking an important security role in the Mediterranean region because of the presence of another key player, the United States, which has not shown any willingness to share its initiatives (such as in the Middle East) with the European states. Thus, the southern Mediterranean states tend not to treat the EU as an important interlocutor on such questions.

The European Union's Mediterranean Policies

Europe needs to watch the situation in the Mediterranean region carefully. It needs to take a more active role and not allow security in the region to be monopolised by outside powers. Its Mediterranean policy has to be a dual-track one as well: i.e. policies for dealing with sub-regional problems and policies for tackling the region-wide challenges. So far, the EU's initiatives in the Mediterranean region have had this flexibility. However, though since its founding the European Union has always felt the need of taking care of its own backyard, paradoxically the EU's Mediterranean policy has traditionally followed the sine curve of euphoric high points followed by longish periods of inertia.

For the sake of consistency and credibility, a linear smoothing out of the cycle, or continuity, is urgently required. A glance at the present state of health of the EU's Mediterranean Partnership initiative is indicative of the lack

of continuity: in Barcelona in 1995, the member states of the European Union and the Mediterranean non-member countries announced yet another new start in their relations, pledging to set up a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership based on the principles of peace, security and shared prosperity. The plan promised action on a comprehensive front but though progress has been achieved in some of its aspects, much of the plan remains on paper, causing frustrations reminiscent of the failed Euro-Arab Dialogue. It may be argued that half a policy is better than none, but if expectations are allowed to rise too high only to be abandoned in free fall, then the result could indeed be stunning.

If the EU wants to be an important player in the Mediterranean region, and the arguments show that it should, it must take a more vigorous approach and strengthen both its policy commitments and credibility.

On the regional "hard" security aspects, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has the least to offer in practice even though as a declaration of principles it has a lot of potential, while a basis for a security dialogue has been inserted in it. This aspect needs to be strengthened if regional security concerns are to be adequately dealt with. It is true that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership agreements signed between the EU and the individual Mediterranean partners enshrine the security dialogue in the legal text. But at the multi-lateral level it falters, most probably for the lack of interest shown by the Mediterranean non-member countries because of their suspicions of western interests and the condition mentioned by Joffe and referred to earlier.

However, the Euro-Mediterranean relationship suffers from another problem, mainly a **lack of legitimacy** deriving from the lack of participation in real as opposed to formal decision-making by the Mediterranean countries. This lack of participation is itself caused by the existence of an **institutional vacuum,** that has to be addressed if the present relationship is to evolve into a proper "Partnership". Addressing the institutional vacuum will require the setting up of institutions conducive to joint decision-making in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Such institutions may also enhance not only the longevity of the partnership but also its consistency over time, apart from the various possibilities of functional spillover. The question that has to be asked in this context is how long the EU's Mediterranean partners will continue to accept a position of inferiority where the EU makes the major decisions and they are then asked to endorse them. The full impact of a future change in the political regimes in the southern shore countries, or a resurgence of nationalism or militancy, will probably be felt on this Achilles' heel of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, with the danger that such pressures could have a crippling effect on the Euro-Mediterranean initiative when it is most needed.

The creation of some EU-Mediterranean institutions will transform the EU's policy into a real partnership or an international regime. It will also address a second problem, namely that since the EU is an essentially northern and central European entity in which the Mediterranean region features very little, though as argued above it should be given more importance, the internal imbalance in the Union will be redressed by locking the Union in a permanent collaborative relationship in a region that is of primary importance to it.

Therefore, the EU's Mediterranean policy should not be seen in static terms and it should be critically analysed to determine whether it is achieving its objectives. The current Mediterranean policy of the EU is far better than no policy at all; barring the caveat made earlier that it may give rise to unfulfilled expectations. Since most non-EU states around the Mediterranean littoral have adopted the liberal economic model to varying degrees, the economic dimension of the EU's policy, the free trade area, is intended to underpin these re-structuring efforts. The modest financial aid extended to the Mediterranean countries is only moderately helpful. More important, as Alfred Tovias has argued, is the fact that the unintended outcomes may be more detrimental to the Mediterranean non-member states than to the EU.[10]

The **institutional vacuum** in EU-Mediterranean relations means that the EU occupies the position of the preponderant actor in the Barcelona process. Indeed as the development of the policy has occurred so far, it has developed in a step-by-step fashion, each dominated by the European Commission and the Council. Thus,

- in the first stage, the Commission drew up its proposals for a new Mediterranean policy;[11]
- these were then endorsed by the Council and returned to the Commission practically unchanged to be put into effect;
- the Commission began to negotiate the agreements on a bilateral basis with the Mediterranean partners. Two of these agreements being completed before the conclusion of the Barcelona Ministerial Conference of 1995, called to give the policy the seal of acceptance by all parties and formally, though not *de facto,* to remove any shadow of imposition.[12]

The Barcelona process provides the framework for meetings of groups of experts at various levels to discuss a number of problems of an economic, political, social and cultural nature. Periodically there are also ministerial meetings in various issue areas; for example a meeting of the foreign ministers was scheduled for June 1998. A "**Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process**", a sort of steering committee, has also been created, involving the non-member states. Thus, a number of "**peripheral**

institutions" have been created that could develop into fully-fledged ones in the future, though not necessarily. The multilateral aspect of the partnership remains weak, largely due to the fragmentation in the region, as was demonstrated by the follow-up meeting to Barcelona, which was held in Malta in April 1997, and which nearly ended in failure due to a worsening of the situation in the Middle East. These expert meetings may lead to functional spillover and the political conferences at ministerial level might yet develop into fully-fledged ministerial institutions of inter-governmental decision -making. The Euro-Mediterranean Committee of the Barcelona Process might also have its powers increased over time. But for all this to happen there must be the political will to promote it.

In the meantime, the European Commission is the motive force of the process. The Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process relies on the European Commission for information and on its network of connections around the region. The Commission has taken the initiative to call and organise the various meetings at most levels. In practical terms this ensures that the institutional vacuum is filled, but it still means that the ultimate aim of creating a Euro-Mediterranean "Partnership" is not met.

The last problem connected with the creation of Euro-Mediterranean institutions is whether the Mediterranean non-member states will be willing to set up the minimum of them required. In other words, is there the political will to establish them? If the inherent belief of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership is that the Mediterranean states will never be able to agree among themselves to set them up, then the provisions in the present policy of south-south integration are a chimera or legal fiction because it will never happen since economic integration assumes at least some level of co-operation between the participating states. However, if the EU takes the alternative approach of giving the non-member states greater responsibility in decision-making, then institution-building can succeed. One area in which greater responsibility can be transferred to joint EU-Mediterranean institutions is the one of detailed enactment and control of the free trade area agreements.

What Sort of Euro-Mediterranean Institutions

When searching for the types of institutions that can be set up in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, it is best to begin from already existing ones. The proto-types of such an institutional structure exist in the form of the institutional set-up of the European Economic Area (EEA) and were created to enhance collaboration for a more efficient running of the EEA without requiring the EFTA states to deepen their integration beyond what was necessary.

In the EU-EFTA agreement that ushered in the European Economic Area (EEA), the following institutions were set up: an EEA Council, a Joint Committee, a Joint Parliamentary Committee, a Consultative Committee,[13] an EFTA Surveillance Authority responsible for the application of the EEA rules and an EFTA Court.[14] On issues requiring the interpretation of the EEA rules, the Joint Committee can refer the issue to the European Court of Justice.[15] To ensure the uniformity of interpretation of rules, since the EEA required the adoption by the EFTA states of substantial parts of Community legislation, the EEA agreement provides for the exchange of information between the European Court of Justice, the Court of First Instance of the European Communities, the Courts of Last Instance of the EFTA states, the EFTA Court and the Joint Committee.[16]

These EEA institutions did not require full-scale integration by the EFTA states. Their aim was to ensure an efficient, consistent and uniform application of rules and the smooth functioning of the EEA. The implications of the EEA institutions are also applicable to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership since the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area will involve more than the dismantling of the traditional trade barriers. It will also involve the application of European Community Competition rules, common rules of origin, including cumulative rules of origin, and substantial parts of Community legislation. Not only must these rules be uniformly enacted in the different national contexts, but they must also be uniformly interpreted throughout the Euro-Mediterranean free trade zone in order to remove all distortions to the smooth functioning of free trade. The settlement of disputes, judicial review and the enforcement of competition rules have to be done consistently throughout the region as well. Finally, some authority has to overlook the whole process to ensure enforcement and the elimination of "free-rider" practices and to act as a clearing-house that ensures compatibility to the overall objectives of the Partnership in the case of all the bilateral agreements between sovereign states as in the case of the south-south free trade accords. This task can be entrusted to a regional 'supranational' or intergovernmental authority empowered for the specific purpose.

In sum the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area cannot do without the minimum of an institutional structure unless the Mediterranean non-member countries are ready to accept the Union's preponderance indefinitely. The need of such institutional structures increases when other factors are considered such as the achievement of south-south free trade agreements that are the second main leg of the realisation of the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area and which are potentially the most economically rewarding for the Mediterranean non-member countries.[17]

The need for addressing the institutional vacuum also derives from the magnitude of the task itself. The first agreements that will usher in the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area are the bilateral ones that are being negotiated between the Commission and each individual Mediterranean Partner. Within this framework, the asymmetry of power between the Community and each Mediterranean partner comes into play and can have negative consequences on all the Mediterranean countries, as ably exhibited by the handling of the agricultural portfolio during the negotiations. But the biggest obstacle is that the full realisation of the free trade area will be achieved only when all the non-EU Mediterranean states have concluded bilateral free trade accords among themselves. The Commission is said to be preparing for this second phase in the development of the Euro -Mediterranean Partnership by preparing a "blue print" of a typical south-south agreement that will be handed to the non-member states to be negotiated by them, presumably with the Commission still holding their hands.

When Cyprus joins the EU, leaving 11 non-member partners in the Mediterranean region, the number of bilateral agreements to achieve the task will be somewhere in the region of 55, if no account is taken of the other protocols that will be needed to put the co-operation aspects (industrial, environment, customs etc) into effect both on a north-south and on a south-south basis. The final count of all the agreements involved is impossible to establish. The proportion of the task does not seem to have been adequately put across. Since 1995, the EU has managed five bilateral accords. How many more years will it take to put the rest into place, ten, perhaps twenty or is it more likely to be 30 years?

Fragmentation, the revealed preference of the non-EU states to trade with their former colonial powers, the failure of integration efforts at the regional and sub-regional levels, the sheer number of countries and ideological differences, the number of agreements that will be required to achieve the task and the preference of the Mediterranean non-member countries to negotiate with the Union on their own in the elusive bid to secure the best unilateral deal, resulting in the worse possible deals for all - these are the main factors undermining institution-building in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

The method chosen to implement the partnership is simple in its initial stages and appears practical. It has the aura of getting things done. But in the second and subsequent phases it will lead to complications as indicated above. The large number of agreements that have to be concluded before the free trade area comes into effect has the advantage of helping the southern Mediterranean countries to achieve south-south regional integration. However, it also carries the danger that the process will stall at some point precipitating an incomplete free trade area.

Finally, the institutional vacuum must be addressed if a meaningful political dialogue is to be started in the region that may be conducive to the lessening of tensions.

By Way of Conclusion
The Role of Cyprus in the European Union

Where does Cyprus stand in all this? The main characteristic of a small state is its vulnerability. A serious disturbance in the Mediterranean or the erosion of the regional *status quo,* affects the EU negatively but a small state like Cyprus in the middle of the region will be even more negatively affected. It is unlikely that Cyprus can withstand serious instability in the Mediterranean region. For example, in common with other European countries of the region, and increasingly so in the Arab world, tourism has become one of the main sources of income of the Republic and one need not dwell too much on the sensitivity of this economic sector to the rise of tension and instability in the region as exemplified by the negative effects on this sector of the Gulf war of 1990.

Cyprus is also poised to give a sound contribution to the enhancement of the overall security of the region. Indeed, the island which in the past suffered and presently suffers from aggression and division, has probably brewed a strong national consciousness that appreciates the validity of peace, the futility of war and the importance of the peaceful resolution of disputes leading to peaceful co-existence. As an EU member state, Cyprus's potential role in the Mediterranean could be one of encouraging these values. In the EU, it will be in its interest to ensure a constant focus on these aims, which also happen to fall squarely within the interests of the Union as a whole. In this context, a peaceful resolution of the Cyprus Question may not only lead to a solution of other connected problems, such as Greek-Turkish relations, but it also strengthens Cypriot credibility in assuming an important role in the EU. Cyprus's credentials with the southern Mediterranean states are enhanced by the fact that it is a non-NATO country, though it should actively analyse the possibility of joining Nato's "Mediterranean dialogue" in order to strengthen this important security forum that may in the long run help in the reduction of misunderstandings between north and south in the region.

As a small country which is a consumer and not a producer of security, without any aspirations to regional preponderance, its policies should be better understood by those countries in the Mediterranean with which Europe needs to enhance its security dialogue.

Cyprus in the EU will have additional instruments in dealing with the region's problems. Outside the Union, Cyprus is a system-ineffectual state, to use

Robert O. Keohane's famous definition, but EU membership will change this.[18] Thus from a state whose foreign policy is an adjustment to reality, Cyprus as an EU member state, will become a country participating in the formulation of policy of one of the most influential communities in the world. As an EU member, it can play a role disproportionate to its size. In carrying out its tasks, it will also have greater access to all the influential capitals of Europe.

It is when pursuing these aims that the stronger complications might set in. As a small country Cyprus can seek the understanding and support of other EU member states, particularly the small states sharing acute security concerns, though it is important to bear in mind that their foreign policies may differ markedly due to the different contexts. As a former colony, and as a country that has suffered military aggression and division, Cyprus has a self-image which is moderated by a sense of helplessness shared by many states of the Mediterranean region, and can therefore be more sensitive to similar concerns. Its past contribution to non-alignment and its smallness, enhance its ability to play the role of the disinterested interlocutor in the Mediterranean region. Many can recall for example the role Cyprus played with other neutral and non-aligned states [N+N] during the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). In the last analysis then, Cyprus can use its small size, normally considered a major handicap, to help the EU refocus more on the severe challenges coming from the Mediterranean region and to the advantage of ensuring the success of its policies.

Two obstacles may negatively affect this role. First there is the obvious problem of all small states, namely the lack of human and material resources to carry out their policies effectively. In this Cyprus has to devise strategic alliances to borrow the additional strength of its EU and Mediterranean partners, and the European supranational institutions and agencies, to supplement its shortage of this scarce commodity. Linked to this is the weakness of a small state in information gathering and analysis that is the only means by which it could possibly play an important role.

The second major obstacle may arise if Cyprus becomes too involved in its internal issues distracting itself from the wider ones. This is not a call to an abandonment of the Cyprus problem: it is simply making the case for the national Cypriot debate on the role of Cyprus in the world, which has already started, to maintain always in focus the need that all states have, of achieving the desired balance between national and regional priorities, which in most cases need not be mutually exclusive.

Geographically and as an EU member state, Cyprus will be on Europe's periphery, at the edge of the stability zone. It will thus be strategically situated

to be one of the first to confront the tidal wave in the event of heightened tensions in the region or a collapse of the present political order in the southern Mediterranean states.

But geographic proximity and the shortness of economic distance to the southern Mediterranean states mean that Cyprus has immense potential benefits to exploit following the successful conclusion of the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area. EU membership will be an important gateway for Cyprus to more accessibility to the southern markets. However, if we go back to the arguments developed earlier, namely that because the second phase of the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area involving south-south accords will come towards the end of the process, and this is the more beneficial to the southern partners, the implication is that in the short to medium term the southern non-member countries may only experience the negative impact of their adjustment to free trade, implying that Cyprus will have few opportunities to exploit in the immediate years following membership.

For these reasons and more - such as the safeguarding of the Mediterranean environment, combating illicit arms and drug trafficking, not to mention other problems that were not mentioned in this short exposition such as the control on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction - Cyprus has an important stake in the maintenance of the overall security and prosperity of the Mediterranean region and a reason for maintaining a constant profile on these issues in the EU.

Therefore, EU membership can be used by Cyprus to transform its otherwise unimportance that derives from its smallness and weakness into effectiveness. Through membership, Cyprus can work and promote those EU policies that are most conducive to the improvement of the regional environment in which Cyprus will have to prosper. This is an opportunity that is not available to all small states. The small and weak countries of the Caribbean Basin have no similar regional structures to integrate themselves in and thus transform themselves from being "system ineffective" into "system affecting" states, while in the meantime, integration among themselves would only add up to an aggregation of weakness. On the other hand, by joining the EU, Cyprus can become a "system affecting" state.

A critique of the approach attempted in this article could take the form of a numerical analysis of Cyprus's weight in the institutions of the EU and the possible permutations of coalitions that can possibly be built to determine the best avenues for Cyprus to choose as an EU member state. However, such an approach has so many unquantifiable variables that it is unlikely to lead to definite and concrete policy proposals. Moreover, by concentrating on power

in the traditional meaning of the term in EU decision-making, and therefore the institutional weight a country has, it may miss the importance of the **role** that a country plays. A proper identification of national and regional priorities, a better co-ordination of scarce diplomatic and human resources, coalition-building, information-gathering and well-argued policies can be very effective at the Union level in assembling a sufficient level of support to ensure that some initiatives are taken.

Lastly, a small state may also contemplate achieving its aims by alternative coalitions outside the EU. This policy instrument may be more hypothetical than real. However, this is where the question of the institutional vacuum in the Euro-Mediterranean context comes into play again. If the minimal, effective institutions are set up in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, thus locking the EU to some degree of power-sharing with the non-member states in the running of the Euro-Mediterranean international regime that will be created, the small state's influence and potential for alternative coalition building outside the confines of the Union increases not to mention the increase in the number of potential sources of its information.

The main challenge for Cyprus in the EU is then on how to overcome the drawbacks of smallness and affect the internal balance of the European Union in a way that ultimately satisfies all its interests.

NOTES

1. In the present EU of 15 member states, nine of these states have a population of around 10 million or less. In a future EU of 21 member states, the number of small states so defined will rise to 14 and in an EU of 28 member states the number will rise to 19.
2. Davies, Norman, *Europe - A History,* Oxford University Press, 1997, pages 56-59.
3. Calleya, Stephen, *Navigating Regional Dynamics in the Post-Cold War World - Patterns of Relations in the Mediterranean Region,* Dartmouth, 1997, page 229 forward.
4. Such as the analysis built on the theories advanced by Samuel P. Huntington , *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order,* Touchstone Books, 1998. See also Huntington's 1993 article in *Foreign Affairs,* summer, 1993.
5. Faria, Fernanda and Vasconcelos, Alvaro, 'Security in Northern Africa: Ambiguity and Reality', *Chaillot Papers,* No 25, September 1996, page 4.
6. Ibid., page 11.
7. The six non-NATO Mediterranean partners are Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.
8. De Santis, Nicola, 'The Future of Nato's Mediterranean Initiative', *NATO Review,* 1, spring 1998, pages 32-35.
9. Joffe, George, 'Southern Attitudes Towards an Integrated Mediterranean Region', *Mediterranean Politics,* Volume 2, No 1, summer 1997, page 18.
10. Tovias, Alfred, 'The Economic Impact of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area on Mediterranean Non-Member Countries', *Mediterranean Politics,* Volume 2, No 1, summer 1997, pages 113-128.
11. Pace, Roderick, 'The Mediterranean Policy of the European Union: From the Treaties to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership' in Xuereb P.G. and Pace R., (eds.), *Economic and Legal Reform in Malta: State of the European Union Conference - 1995",* EDRC, University of Malta, 1995, pages 394-409.
12. Vide texts of the final declarations of the Barcelona Conference and the Malta follow-up published respectively in the *Bulletin of the European Union,* Bull.EU 11-1995, pages 136-145 and Bull.EU 6-1997, pages 165-170.
13. Articles 89-96 of the 'Agreement on the European Economic Area', Luxembourg, 1992.
14. Ibid., article 108.
15. Ibid., article 111(3).
16. Ibid., article 106.
17. Tovias, op.cit.
18. Keohane, Robert O., 'Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics', *International Organisation,* 23, No 2, spring 1969, pp. 295-296.